

Left to right, top, Pork Tourtière, Tourtière à l'Alsace, Beef Tourtière; middle, Duck Tourtière, Beef a

The upper crust in tourtière

Readers offer their tried-and-true family recipes

By JULIAN ARMSTRONG
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Quebec's tourtière tradition is alive well and as satisfying a holiday habit if it dates back four generations or a mere year.

This warming winter dish conjures up contented memories in both old and young Gazette readers, we discovered from the 40 recipes and recollections that were sent in from all parts of the Montreal area and such centres as Quebec City, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Deux-Montagnes, Richmond, St. Stanislas and Senneterre.

"I can't eat bought tourtière," wrote Cheryl Berger, 23, of Dollard des Ormeaux. "I wait for every winter for one reason alone — to eat home-baked tourtière," she added, enclosing her family's three-generation recipe she took with her when she left home.

Ingredients in the pie vary widely, we found. Most contained ground pork, often combined with veal or beef, and with potatoes or bread crumbs to mop up the juices. A few were made with poultry and game.

"I like to add a piece of moose meat and a rabbit or two," wrote Vada Agnew of Douglastown, enclosing a tourtière of pork flavored with leeks along with the usual onions. And Mrs. J. Lewis of Richmond included rabbit and venison in her list of meats to add to the basic pork.

Robert Sternberg of Côte St. Luc sent a kosher version using veal and fresh tomatoes. Several contributors had cut calories by cooling the cooked meat mixture, then removing the solidified fat.

Others reveal that they provide contrast to the fat in either filling or pastry. Marie-Angé Drouin of Montreal adds lemon juice to her pastry.

Sources for this dish varied too, from grandmother's receipt books to neighbors to newspaper recipes dating back as far as 40 years ago.

Marcel and Denise Gauvin of Lachute enjoy a pie with a pastry that came originally from a chef on Canadian National trains, and a meat mixture flavored with herbs and soy sauce. Estelle Katz of Ville St. Laurent remembers acquiring her meat mixture recipe via phone a few

Tourtière à l'Alsace Monique Gopal, Châteauguay

Early settlers who came to Quebec from Alsace were responsible for the first local tourtières, tarts, or tarts, writes Monique Gopal, who acquired this recipe from her late father, a pastry chef in Colmar, Alsace, France.

The meat mixture is marinated, placed raw in the puff pastry crust and flavored with the addition of chicken livers. One taster was reminded of a lean, light pie, another called it "the quiche of tourtières."

- 250 g ground veal (1/2 pound)
- 250 g ground pork (1/2 pound)
- 250 g ground beef (1/2 pound)
- 185 mL Sylvaner Alsacien or Riesling wine
- 2 dry shallots or 3 medium onions
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (30 mL)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (30 mL)
- Salt, pepper
- Fresh, chopped parsley
- 3 chicken livers (optional)
- 2 pounds puff pastry (1 kg)*
- 1 egg yolk

The day before baking the tourtière, marinate the veal, pork and beef in the wine covered in the refrigerator.

When ready to make the tourtière heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large, heavy frying pan. Chop shallots or onions finely and sauté in hot oil until soft and glazed. Add eggs, flour, salt, pepper and parsley, and mix well.

Roll out one pound (500 g) of the pastry (*Gopal bays it at Kosher Quality Bakery, 5855 Victoria Ave., Montreal) into a circle measuring about 25 cm (10 1/4 inches).

Arrange in black, metal, 25-cm

(10-inch) pie plate. Spread evenly with meat mixture. Slice chicken livers and arrange evenly over meat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Roll out remaining one pound (500 g) pastry in a circle measuring about 25 cm (10 inches). Arrange on top of meat. Wet edges with water and fold outer edge under, pressing it to lower pastry.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Mix egg yolk with one tablespoon water and a pinch of salt and brush all over pie. Decorate crust with leftover dough, as desired, and make air vents with a fork so steam can escape during baking.

Bake tourtière in preheated oven for 25 minutes, then lower heat to 400 g. degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake 25 minutes more. Serve hot tourtière with a green salad, and a celery root salad, and Sylvaner Alsacien or Riesling wine.

Pork Tourtière Kathleen Fleet Pineau Quebec City

This recipe was bequeathed to Pineau, who came from the Lower St. Lawrence region, some 40 years ago. The gift of an aunt who was considered a Cordes Bleues cook, the flavoring has been altered somewhat to suit her family.

- 1 1/2 pounds ground pork (835 g)
- 1/2 cup cold water (125 to 175 mL)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onions (125 mL)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery (60 mL)
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper (5 mL)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon savory (2 mL)
- 1/2 teaspoon rosemary (1 mL)
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg (1 mL)

Pinch cinnamon
1/4 cup rolled oats
Pastry for 2-crust
pie (23 cm)

In a large, heavy frypan, cook and stir water until it reaches a boil, add oats, pepper, bay leaf, savory, nutmeg and cinnamon over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Add the oat mixture and cover for another couple of minutes. Roll out a 9-inch (23 cm) pie pan and add meat mixture, and pastry.

Cut air vents in top crust as desired. Bake in oven for 15 minutes. Increase heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake another 25 minutes.

Beef and Pork Tourtière Margo Peterson, Pointe-Claire

Submitted by a former reader who has enjoyed this 30 years, this has become a favorite with children, some of whom now live in French-speaking countries.

They are now making it at Christmas instead of French tourtière, I believe.

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped carrots
- 2 carrots, pared
- 2 pounds minced meat (250 g)
- 1 cup fresh bread (250 mL)

Expert tips on making memory pies

Home economist Labelle offers her tip on turning our a tourtière to remember.

* Meats with 20 to 25 per cent fat give the best texture although not

possibility of a dry pie since fresh meat usually loses natural juices as it thaws. Extra seasonings can disguise the loss of meat flavor.

* Cool the meat mixture comple-

than the inner part. Protect the rim with aluminum foil.

* A thick rim to the longer to cook, so will

tourtière; middle, Duck Tourtière, Beef and Pork Tourtière, Spiced Tourtière; bottom, Tourtière Maleon.

Just in tourtière tradition

Old-truth family recipes for this Quebec-style treat

1) pie plate. Spread evenly with mirepoix. Place chicken and arrange evenly over. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

out remaining one pound (500 g) in a circle measuring 18 cm (10 inches). Arrange on meat. Wet edges with water and outer edge under, pressing well.

Bake at oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Mix egg yolk with lemon juice and a pinch of salt and brush all over pie. Decorate with leftover dough, as desired, and make air vents with a fork so air can escape during baking. A tourtière is preheated oven 20 minutes, then lower heat to 400 F (200 degrees C) and 25 minutes more. Serve hot with a green salad, and a potato salad, and Sylvaner Alsatian Riesling wine.

Pork Tourtière

Kathleen Fleet Pineau
Gatineau City

recipe was bequeathed to me, who came from the Lower Laurentian region, some 40 years ago. The gift of an aunt who was served a Cordon Bleu cook, its taste has been altered somewhat by her family.

1/2 pounds ground pork (825 g)

1/2 cup cold water (125 to 175 mL)

cup finely chopped

onions (125 mL)

cup finely chopped celery

(50 mL)

teaspoon pepper (5 mL)

bay leaf

teaspoon savory (2 mL)

teaspoon rosemary (1 mL)

teaspoon grated nutmeg

(1 mL)

Pinch cinnamon
1/2 cup rolled oats (50 mL)
Pastry for 2-crust, 8-inch
pie (23 cm)

In a large, heavy frying pan, add pork and cold water. When mixture reaches a boil, add onions, celery, pepper, bay leaf, savory, rosemary, nutmeg and cinnamon and cook over medium heat for 1 1/2 hours; halfway through cooking time, add salt.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Add the rolled oats to meat mixture and cook, stirring, for another couple of minutes. Line a 8-inch (23 cm) pie pan with pastry, add meat mixture, and cover with pastry.

Cut air vents in top crust and decorate as desired. Bake in preheat oven for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake another 25 minutes or until done.

Beef and Pork Tourtière

Marge Peterson, Pointe du Lac

Submitted by a former Montrealer who has enjoyed it for more than 30 years, this recipe has become a favorite with Peterson's children, some of whom have married into French-speaking families. "They are now making this meat pie at Christmas instead of the original French tourtière," the owner writes.

3 onions, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely
chopped
1/2 cup chopped celery (125
mL)
2 carrots, pared, shredded
2 pounds minced steak (1
kg)
1/2 pound minced lean pork
(250 g)
1 cup fresh breadcrumbs
(250 mL)

1 teaspoon Herbes de Provence (5 mL)
1 teaspoon salt (5 mL)
1/2 teaspoon pepper (1 mL)
1/2 cup grated Parmesan
cheese (125 mL)
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh
parsley (50 mL)
Pastry for 2 9-inch
(23-cm) double-crust pies
Vinegar*

Using large, heavy frying pan, add meat, onions, garlic, celery and carrots and cook until meat has lost its pink tint.

Add bread crumbs, Herbes de Provence (*sold in specialty food shops in jars covered with red and white checked cotton), salt, pepper, cheese and parsley and mix gently, but thoroughly.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Line two 9-inch (23-cm) pie plates with pastry and divide meat mixture evenly between the two. Cover with top crust, seal, cut hole in centre to let steam escape.

Brush tops with vinegar (*malt, wine or apple cider vinegar), place on bottom rack of preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes. Lower heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C), move pie to middle rack and bake for 35 to 40 minutes more, or until pastry is golden brown. Makes two tourtières.

Duck Tourtière

Mrs. C. Maisonneuve
Terrebonne

The most elaborate and surprising tourtière of those submitted, this recipe contains so much sauce that it is first cousin to a deep-dish meat pie. The sauce is rich in natural gelatin, so could well be served cold. It was given to Maisonneuve by a close family friend many years ago.

1 large duck (about 2 kg or

4 1/2 pounds)
2 tablespoons cubed salt
pork (30 mL)
1 large onion, minced
2 cups chicken consommé
(500 mL)
Water
1/2 cup browned flour (125
mL)*
1 cup cold water (250 mL)
1/2 teaspoon dried savory (2
mL)
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
(1 mL)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon (1
mL)
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (1 mL)
Biscuit-type Pastry (see
recipe)

Clean duck and cut into pieces. Render salt pork and use to dry duck pieces until browned on all sides, adding onion and sautéing it along with duck.

Remove duck and onion to large heavy pot. Add chicken consommé, bring to a boil and simmer until duck is tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours, adding enough water to cover every half hour. You should have 3 cups of liquid at the end of the cooking time. Discard bones and skin. Let cool and strain off fat.

Mix browned flour with cold water and add to meat mixture (*1/2 cup flour, spread dry frying pan with flour and cook, stirring, until flour browns, or bake at 350 degrees F or 180 degrees C for about 30 minutes). Let simmer for a few minutes until liquid thickens. Add savory, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg, mixing well.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Line 3-quart (3.5 L) casserole with pastry. Add duck mixture. Cover with remaining pastry, cutting vents so steam can escape. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees F (180 degrees C) for 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

Pastry

2 cups all-purpose flour
(500 mL)
3 tablespoons baking powder
(15 mL)
1/2 teaspoon baking soda (2
mL)
6 tablespoons shortening
(90 mL)
1 cup (about) sour milk
(1.05 L)

on making memorable meat pie

than the inner part. You can protect the rim with an aluminum foil collar.

A thick rim to the pie takes longer to cook, so will avoid over-

cooking the outer part. You can protect the rim with an aluminum foil collar.

teaspoons water (10 mL) and brush mixture on pastry, using a brush with real bristles. A synthetic brush will give you a streaky effect.